



*RENEWABLE  
ENERGY  
PROGRAM*

**CALIFORNIA  
ENERGY  
COMMISSION**

# **CONSUMER EDUCATION PROGRAM**

**Third Edition**

# **GUIDEBOOK**

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Arnold Schwarzenegger, *Governor*

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This guidebook was formally adopted by the California Energy Commission on February 19, 2003, under Public Utilities Code Section 383.5, Subdivision (h), and subsequently revised under this authority and Public Resources Code Section 25747, Subdivision (a), on May 19, 2004, and March 14, 2007.

# Abstract

The Consumer Education Program provides grants and contracts to promote renewable energy and help build a consumer market in California for renewable energy and emerging renewable technologies. The *Consumer Education Program Guidebook* describes eligibility and the process for applying for funding from the Consumer Education Program. This *Guidebook* also discusses how Consumer Education Program funds may be used for a regional accounting system to verify compliance with the state's Renewables Portfolio Standard (RPS).

# Keywords

consumer education, incentives, funding, grants, eligibility, renewable energy, renewables portfolio standard

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# I. Introduction

The California Energy Commission (Energy Commission) has developed this *Guidebook* to implement and administer its Consumer Education Program pursuant to Senate Bill 1038<sup>1</sup> and Senate Bill 1250.<sup>2</sup> These laws, in conjunction with the Reliable Electric Service Investments Act,<sup>3</sup> extend the collection of a non-bypassable system benefit charge initiated in 1998 under Assembly Bill 1890<sup>4</sup> and authorize the expenditure of funds collected to support existing, new, and emerging renewable resources. The goal of these laws is to establish a competitive, self-sustaining renewable energy supply for California while increasing the near-term quantity of renewable energy generated in-state.

This *Guidebook* describes the requirements for receiving funding under the Consumer Education Program, one of several program elements within the Energy Commission's Renewable Energy Program.

The Energy Commission has adopted other guidebooks to address the requirements for receiving funding under the other elements of the Renewable Energy Program. In addition, guidelines governing the overall administration of the Renewable Energy Program are set forth in the *Overall Program Guidebook* and include information and requirements that apply overall to the Renewable Energy Program and program elements.

To qualify for funding under the Consumer Education Program, applicants must satisfy the requirements contained in both the *Overall Program Guidebook* and this *Consumer Education Program Guidebook*, along with the requirements issued in the specific solicitation to which they are responding. These guidebooks, along with other information about the Renewable Energy Program, can be found on the Energy Commission's website at <[www.energy.ca.gov/renewables](http://www.energy.ca.gov/renewables)>.

## II. Purpose

The goals of the Consumer Education Program are to:

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<sup>1</sup> Senate Bill 1038; Chapter 515, Statutes of 2002. The pertinent provisions of SB 1038 were formerly codified in Public Utilities Code Sections 383.5 and 445, but are now codified in Public Resources Code Sections 25740 through 25751 as a result of Senate Bill 183 (Chapter 666, Statutes of 2003).

<sup>2</sup> Senate Bill 1250; Chapter 512, Statutes of 2006. SB 1250 amends pertinent provisions in Public Resources Code Sections 25740 through 25751.

<sup>3</sup> Public Utilities Code Section 399, et seq., as enacted by Assembly Bill 995 (Chapter 1051, Statutes of 2000) and Senate Bill 1194 (Chapter 1050, Statutes of 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Assembly Bill 1890; Chapter 854, Statutes of 1996.

- Raise consumer awareness of renewable electricity generation options and their benefits,
- Increase the purchases of small-scale emerging renewable systems installed on customer premises,
- Leverage strategic alliances and partnerships with organizations connected to renewable energy in California and;
- Develop information, products, and processes that promote the renewable energy market in general, including information, products, and processes that add consumer value to renewable energy by verifying and tracking energy generation and verifying retail product claims.

### **III. Overview**

The Consumer Education Program provides grants and contracts to eligible projects and programs that further the purpose of the Renewable Energy Program. To qualify for funding, entities must generally compete in a solicitation that may be generic and open to all projects or targeted to a specific area of interest.

## **IV. Eligibility Requirements**

### **Projects Eligible for Funding**

To qualify for funding under the Consumer Education Program, projects and programs must provide information to increase public knowledge about renewable energy, overcome market barriers to adopting renewable energy, and conduct other activities that assist in building the market for renewable energy and/or renewable energy technologies. Projects and programs that compose a series of connected projects that meet these purposes may also be eligible for funding from the Consumer Education Program.

All reports, products, and outreach materials developed with program funds must be factual and broad-based, rather than specific to any product, service, manufacturer, installer, provider, or generator. Similarly, any software developed with program funds must support the renewable energy market in general, as opposed to supporting any particular renewable energy product, service, manufacturer, installer, provider, or generator. As appropriate, projects should help position the Energy Commission as a consumer information resource.

Projects funded under the Consumer Education Program must recognize and

identify the Energy Commission's funding of the project in any materials or products that are developed.

## **Topics Eligible for Funding**

Projects and programs eligible for funding must address one or more of the following program goals and objectives:

1. Raising or increasing consumer awareness of renewable electricity generation options, the technologies, and their benefits,
2. Increasing adoption and installation of small-scale emerging renewable technologies,
3. Leveraging strategic alliances and partnerships with organizations connected to renewable energy industry, and
4. Developing information, products, and processes that promote the renewable energy market in general, including information, products, and processes that add consumer value to renewable energy by verifying and tracking energy production and verifying retail product claims.

## **Applicants Eligible for Funding**

Applicants eligible for funding must be one of the following:

1. A non-profit individual, entity, organization, or company with a mission, expertise, and a track record that is consistent with the goals of the Consumer Education Program.
2. An individual, entity, organization, or company with experience and expertise in public relations, consumer education, public-interest marketing, data collection, analysis and dissemination, or related software development.
3. An agency, organization, or entity that conducts highly leveraged projects that involve public education or information about renewable energy.

Funding for projects or programs cannot be provided directly to commercial entities that are participating in the electricity market as a seller or trader of electricity services (including electric utilities), or that are manufacturing, selling, or installing renewable electric generation technologies or systems.

## **Public Interest Requirements**

Eligible projects and programs must be equitable to all stakeholders and the general public. As noted above, information must be factual and broad-based and must not provide an advantage to any specific manufacturer, seller, installer of renewable energy technologies or systems, or generator. Overall guidance in achieving these public interest requirements is listed below.

Projects and programs must achieve the following:

1. Provide adequate, equitable, and timely information so that any interested party has the opportunity to coordinate with and/or participate in the project or program.
2. Return benefits, directly or indirectly, to ratepayers funding the Renewable Energy Program. These ratepayers currently include those in the service territories of Southern California Edison Company, San Diego Gas and Electric Company, and Pacific Gas and Electric Company.
3. Be inclusive in message by providing either generic information that applies to all relevant and known products or services, without mentioning any specific product or service, or by providing information about all relevant known products and services available to consumers.

More specific requirements may be incorporated into individual solicitations, as provided in the solicitations section below.

## **Limitations on Program Funds**

Consumer Education Program funds may be used for a regional accounting system to verify compliance with the state's Renewables Portfolio Standard under Public Utilities Code Section 399.13, Subdivision (b), only upon appropriation by the Legislature in the annual Budget Act. Program funds encumbered for a regional accounting system after September 27, 2006,<sup>5</sup> shall be recovered through a system user fee as determined by the Energy Commission.

## **V. Solicitations and Alternate Award Mechanisms**

Under the direction of the Committee overseeing the Renewable Energy Program, the Energy Commission may release solicitations that announce the availability of Consumer Education Program funds to interested parties. Solicitations will be released as needed. Entities interested in obtaining funding must submit an application or proposal to the Energy Commission as specified in the pertinent solicitation document.

A solicitation document may be noticed as either a Request for Proposal (RFP) or Invitation for Bid (IFB), in the case of contracts, or a Program Opportunity Notice (PON), in the case of grants. Solicitations will either be open to any project that meets the Consumer Education Program goals and purposes or targeted to a specific area

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<sup>5</sup> September 27, 2006, is the effective date of SB 1250, which amends Public Resources Code Section 25746 and specifies that, "If the commission provides funding for a regional accounting system to verify compliance with the renewable portfolio standard by retail sellers, pursuant to Subdivision (b) of Section 399.13 of the Public Utilities Code, the commission shall recover all costs from user fees." [Public Resources Code Section 25746, Subdivision (b).]

of interest.

The solicitation document will specify the amount of funding available, any per-project funding caps or minimums, any match fund requirements, the project term (and in some cases, project category), the eligibility and administrative requirements for submitting an application, and the format and elements to be addressed as part of the application. The solicitation document will also provide the criteria and process that the Energy Commission will follow in evaluating applications as well as the timetable for making awards.

The solicitation document will also include a sample of the terms and conditions in the case of a grant solicitation and a sample contract agreement in the case of a contract solicitation. The funding award agreement or contract will identify the terms and conditions that the awardees must execute to receive a funding award. These terms and conditions include provisions dealing with the Energy Commission's indemnification, funding award payments and invoicing, project management, progress reports, dispute resolution, and award termination, as well as any provisions required by law. The Energy Commission may add special conditions on an as-needed basis to address the particulars of a specific solicitation. Eligible entities must provide specific information in their applications and bids for contracts and grants, as outlined in the solicitation document.

In certain cases, funding may be provided to support highly leveraged activities that address one or more of the goals and objectives of the Consumer Education Program, such as collaborative efforts between multiple public and private entities and organizations. Funding for collaborative efforts may be awarded on an individual basis without the benefit of a noticed solicitation if deemed appropriate by the Committee overseeing the Renewable Energy Program and not otherwise prohibited by any applicable state contracting requirements. To support these efforts, the Energy Commission must acquire a proportional benefit (or greater) for the funds allocated to the leveraged activity. As an example, consumer education funds may be used to support a multi-state or multi-agency public awareness campaign or information collection and dissemination system or product provided the product or outcome of the joint effort meets or exceeds the amount of the consumer education funds.

## **Match Funding**

Eligible entities applying for grant funds must provide match fund or in-kind contributions for their projects or programs, unless otherwise specified in the applicable solicitation document. Consumer Education Program grants provide support and funds to enhance the eligible recipient's project or program. The conditions and level of match funds required are specified in the solicitation documents. Under special circumstances, the solicitation document may provide for an exemption to the match funding requirements.

Unless otherwise specified in the solicitation document, match funding may originate from a variety of sources, including the applicant or other team members in the

project, industry stakeholders, public interest or environmental organizations, governmental organizations, and electric utilities.

Match funding may include, but is not limited to, the contribution of cash, its equivalent, or a contribution of indirect costs or other non-cash support, such as:

1. In-kind services or contributions,
2. Use of equipment or office space,
3. Discounted rates, fees, or charges,
4. Food, beverages, or facilities for workshops and conferences.

All match fund contributions must be quantified, substantiated and documented, and directly related to the specific project or program for the grant funding sought.

Match funding cannot include the following:

1. Contributions made to the project before the Energy Commission's award of grant funds.
2. Funding or any other contribution to the project or program originating from the Energy Commission.

Contracts do not typically have the same match funding requirements.

## **VI. Award Process**

### **Selection Process**

Proposals and applications received in response to a grant solicitation will be reviewed and considered as described in the solicitation document. The review process will consist of an initial screening to ensure the proposals and applications meet eligibility requirements, followed by a more thorough evaluation by an evaluation committee. The evaluation committee will score all proposals and applications using the scoring criteria outlined in the solicitation document and recommend winning project(s) to the Committee, which in turn will make award recommendations to the Energy Commission, as necessary. The Committee, in its discretion, may reject any or all projects recommended by the evaluation committee or cancel the solicitation entirely.

Proposals and bids received in response to a contract solicitation will be reviewed and evaluated as described in the solicitation document and consistent with state contracting requirements.

### **Approval of Funding Awards**

Grants and contracts greater than \$10,000 must be approved by the Energy Commission at a Business Meeting. In addition, contracts greater than \$10,000 may

need to be approved by various control agencies, including the Department of General Services and the Department of Finance.

Grants and contracts of \$10,000 or less may be approved by the Committee overseeing the Renewable Energy Program and the Energy Commission's Executive Director, consistent with the Energy Commission's practices and procedures existing at that time. Unless specified otherwise in the Energy Commission's practices and procedures, these smaller grants and contracts will be considered approved by the Energy Commission once notice of the Committee's approval is published.

## **Cancellation or Reduction of Funding Awards**

Awards may be cancelled or reduced as specified in the solicitation document, individual contracts or grant agreements, or the *Overall Program Guidebook*.

# **VII. Administrative Requirements**

## **Award Extensions or Changes in Scope**

The term of an individual grant award may be extended for projects or programs that cannot be completed on schedule if the extension is reasonable and does not appreciably affect the value of the project or program as determined by the Energy Commission. The grantee must request a grant award extension in writing at least 30 days before the end of the grant term. The request must be submitted to the Energy Commission project manager and justify the extension and include a revised term date. An extension may be approved at the discretion of the Energy Commission project manager.

Changes to a grant award's work statement, budget line items, or both may be made under certain conditions. The changes must not alter the original scope or purpose of the project or program as proposed and approved by the Committee or the Energy Commission. The grantee must request work statement and budget changes in writing to the Energy Commission's project manager before implementing any changes. Changes may be approved at the discretion of the Energy Commission's project manager.

Changes in the term, work statement, or budget of a contract award may be made only if authorized under state contracting requirements.

## **Progress Reports**

All entities receiving funds from the Consumer Education Program must submit regular progress reports to the Energy Commission's project manager. The frequency of these reports will be specified in the contract or grant agreement. Unless otherwise specified in the contract or grant agreement, progress reports must include the

following information:

1. Status of tasks in the work statement and overall progress with the project.
2. Status and copies of deliverables identified in the work statement.
3. Comparison of expenses to the expected budget and a description of match funds applied to the program.
4. Effectiveness of project to date (measures of effectiveness or project reach).
5. Any problems, difficulties, or delays in completing the project.

A progress report is required when submitting a payment request or invoice. No payments can be made without a progress report.

## **Invoicing and Payments**

Unless specified otherwise in the grant agreement or contract, funding award payments will be subject to the following conditions:

1. Payments will be made on a reimbursement basis only after the entity has submitted an invoice that includes all documentation to the Energy Commission.
2. All invoices must be submitted to the Energy Commission's accounting office and accompanied by all backup documentation and a progress report. In the case of a grant, a payment request form must be completed and signed. The backup documentation must include copies of paid invoices, receipts, and personnel time records, where appropriate. For grant projects, the invoice and the progress report must include documentation about match funds applied to the project or program.
3. The Energy Commission's project manager and the Renewable Energy Program Director, or designees, must approve and sign all invoices prior to payment. This approval is subject to acceptable submittal of all required progress reports, other specified products or deliverables, and the appropriateness of the invoiced expenses under the grant agreement or contract as determined by the Energy Commission.

## **Evaluation**

Unless specified otherwise in the grant agreement or contract, all awardees that receive funds under the Consumer Education Program must objectively evaluate the effectiveness of their services, activities, and products in creating consumer awareness and helping to build a market for renewable energy in California. To achieve this, an awardee may be required to obtain the services of a qualified outside evaluator who will determine the evaluation methodology, collect necessary data, assess metrics, standards and procedures, and conduct analysis to determine the effectiveness of the project or program in meeting the stated goals.

## **Payment Dispute**

The amount of any payment received under a grant agreement or contract may be

disputed as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.

## **Random Audits**

Awardees under the Consumer Education Program are subject to random audits as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.

## **Record Retention**

Awardees under the Consumer Education Program must retain records pertaining to their funded projects or programs as specified in the *Overall Program Guidebook*.